

CATHERINE'S EMBASSY TO FLORENCE

by others because they thought to speak well by speaking evil of her."¹

As soon as Catherine arrived, she began to urge upon the principal citizens the need of making peace with the Pope. Niccolo Soderini brought her to speak with the officials of the Parte Guelfa, to whom she declared that it was absolutely right to deprive of their office those who were attempting to prolong the war, as such men were not rulers, but destroyers of the city. Among the captains of the Party who held office from March 20 to May 20 of this year were Stoldo Altoviti, Ristoro Canigiani, Tommaso Soderini, Alessandro Buondelmonti, and Benedetto Peruzzi. They readily agreed to put all possible pressure upon the Signoria to work for peace, "not only with words, but with deeds." Unfortunately, they needed no instigation from her to "admonish" citizens whom they professed to consider obnoxious. The complaint had already been raised that it was less dangerous in Florence to blaspheme God than to blaspheme the captains of the Party. The more violent of their adherents seized the first opportunity for each to admonish his private enemy as a Ghibelline, "even if he were more Guelf than Charlemagne."²

Among the Florentines who at this time became Catherine's disciples, two need special notice : Barduccio di Piero Canigiani and Giannozzo di Benci Sacchetti. Barduccio, whom we have already mentioned as one of the "adopted sons" of Giovanni dalle Celle, was a consumptive youth, who now clung to Catherine heart and soul, entered her spiritual family as one of her secretaries, and never again left her. "He was young in years," writes Fra Raimondo, "but old in life ; by birth of the city of flowers, but adorned with all the flowers of virtue. The sacred virgin loved him, it seemed to me, more tenderly than the

¹ Lib. IX. rubr. 773. Marchionne's statement, about Canigiani afterwards adopting the subscriptions for his own use, is obviously a partisan falsehood. After Catherine's death, even this adherent of the Eight practically acknowledges her sanctity. *Ibid.*, Lib. XI. rubr. 866.

² 7[^], Lib. IX. rubr. 767, 788.